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**Aligning for Hemispheric Defense:
Synchronizing NORTHCOM and SOUTHCOM Efforts to Combat
Transnational Criminal Organizations**

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INTRODUCTION

Transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) pose a significant and growing threat to national and international security. Transnational organized crime and illicit trafficking aggressively seek to undermine governments and institutions throughout Latin America. This proliferation has generated a significant surge in violence in the region, to include the United States.¹ Violence and crime are symptoms of a larger climate of insecurity throughout the region. TCO penetration of Central American states is deepening, leading to co-option and further weakening of governance in many others.² Terrorists and insurgents, such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), are turning to TCOs to generate funding and acquire logistical support to carry out their violent acts. International terrorist groups, including Hamas and Hezbollah, have also reportedly funded terrorist activities through linkages formed with TCOs in South America.³ While the crime – terror nexus is still mostly opportunistic; this threat is critical, especially if it involves the successful criminal transfer of WMD material to terrorists or their penetration of human smuggling networks as a means for terrorists to enter the United States.⁴

TCOs and their illicit trafficking activities clearly pose a national security threat to the nations of the Western Hemisphere. The role of the Department of Defense (DoD) in the *National Strategy to Combat Transnational Crime*, specifically U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) and U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), is not clearly defined despite the Geographic Combatant Commanders' (GCCs') responsibilities for homeland defense and security cooperation in Latin America, the nexus of TCOs' activities impacting U.S. national security. The role of the military is principally focused on addressing the *supply* component of the illicit trafficking problem presented by TCOs, while the *demand* component of illicit trafficking is considered as a domestic law enforcement and health care challenge. Regardless, the current (GCC) construct is not optimized to address these threats which cross borders and undermine the stability of nations, subverting government institutions through corruption, breeding violence, and harming citizens worldwide.⁵ The threat neither respects international borders nor the boundaries between U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) and U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM). Without a comprehensive, whole of government approach to combat the illicit trafficking activities of TCOs in the Western Hemisphere, U.S. Government response will remain fractured, allowing an adaptive enemy the opportunity to exploit gaps and seams in counter illicit trafficking efforts. NORTHCOM and SOUTHCOM, along with regional partners, must achieve a unity of effort to provide a defense in depth against the illicit trafficking threat posed by TCOs. In order to achieve this objective, the U.S. will need to fundamentally realign its military command and control structure in the Western Hemisphere.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Defining the threat is a prerequisite to understanding the problem at hand. According to the *Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime*: Transnational organized crime refers to those self-perpetuating association of individuals who operate transnationally for the purpose of obtaining power, influence, monetary and/or commercial gains, wholly or in part by illegal means, protecting their activities through a transnational organized crime structure and the exploitation of transnational organized commerce or communication mechanisms.⁶

TCOs and terrorist organizations have much in common: both are engaged in illicit activity; prosper in states with weak or corrupt governments; exploit communications technologies; operate as matrixed networks; have the capacity to regenerate; launder illicit profits; and are international in scope.⁷ Today, there is great concern with the relationship between drug trafficking and other forms of crime, particularly terrorism. The assumption of this relationship can often dissuade or deter government actions to eliminate criminal activity. The nexus of terrorism and illicit trafficking is incredibly threatening and powerful, even when their

only link is financial. The international community mobilized institutionally to combat supporters of terrorist organizations, including nation states. However, when financial support comes from non-state actors, such as TCOs, terrorism is more difficult to discover and eliminate. The inseparable link between terrorists, TCOs and illicit trafficking merits an interagency approach to combat their activities.

TCOs succeed in an environment conducive to their development and persistence over time. In Latin America, a number of socio-economic conditions and historical legacies exist that, when exacerbated by the illegal drug trade, create instability, crime and violence. Combined, these factors create an environment conducive to illicit trafficking and are manifested by an increase in money laundering activities, excessive violence, easily destabilized governments, human rights abuses, institutionalized corruption, and associated financing activities of terrorist groups. Drug demand continues to enrich and empower TCOs around the globe. Mexican drug trafficking organizations use violence to consolidate their hold on the illicit drug market in the Western Hemisphere, protect their base of operations in Mexico, and expand their reach into the United States.⁸ Central America has become the key transshipment hub for illicit trafficking in the hemisphere as approximately 90% of cocaine destined for the United States now transits the region. The rising wave of violence and illicit trafficking, coupled with the expansive resources of TCOs, is challenging the law enforcement capacities of some Central American governments.⁹

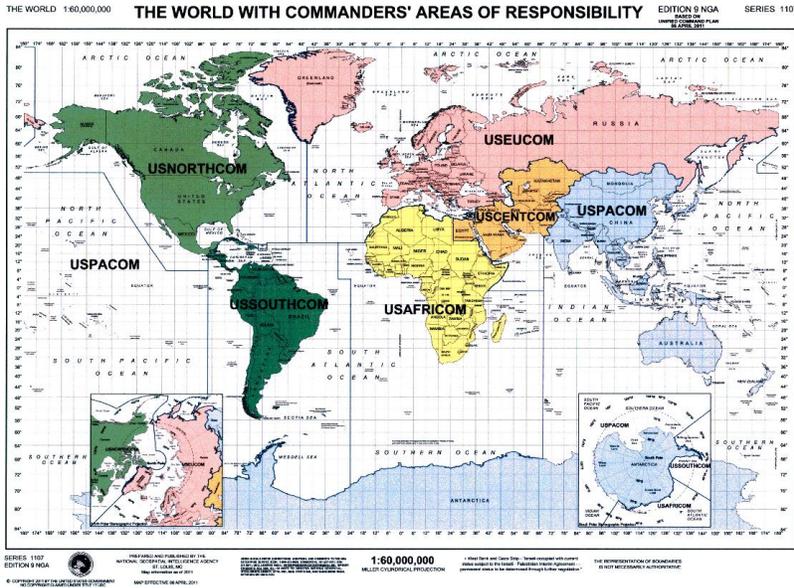
OPERATIONAL APPROACHES

The written guidance by our nation's leaders for the United States and our partners to counter TCOs begins at the highest levels as articulated in the *National Security Strategy*, *Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime*, and *National Military Strategy*. In the *National Security Strategy*, President Obama committed to four enduring national interests: security, prosperity, respect for universal values, and the shaping of international order.¹⁰ The President identifies TCOs as one of the most significant challenges to these national interests.¹¹ Combating transnational criminal and trafficking networks requires a multidimensional strategy that safeguards citizens, breaks financial strength of criminal and terrorist networks, disrupts illicit trafficking networks, defeats transnational criminal organizations, fights government corruption, strengthens the rule of law, bolsters judicial systems, and improves transparency. While these are major challenges, the United States will be able to devise and execute a collective strategy with other nations facing the same threats.¹²

In defining the "ways" the *National Military Strategy* amplifies the same in the following approach, "In combination with U.S. diplomatic and development efforts, we will leverage our convening power to foster regional and international cooperation in addressing transnational security challenges."¹³ This theme continues throughout the *Quadrennial Defense Review* and the *Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review*, providing a mechanism for correlating resources towards these efforts.

The *Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime* highlights regional priorities areas, including within the Western Hemisphere, for action. NORTHCOM and SOUTHCOM share many responsibilities in this regard, and both highlight counter-TCO (C-TCO) operations as a continued priority in their operational approach through their respective Theater Strategies.

Figure 1, on the following page depicts the respective GCC areas of responsibility (AORs).¹⁴



Both Western Hemisphere GCCs share boundaries and most certainly a similar TCO threat. For comparison purposes, the table below depicts the respective GCC strategies towards the TCO threat and supported theater end states.

NORTHCOM	SOUTHCOM
<p>In support of the President’s Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime, USNORTHCOM will proactively cooperate with Mexico, Canada, The Bahamas, and other partners in the Caribbean to enhance mutual trust, increase collaboration, and improve capacity against TCOs in the activities to Homeland Defense and North American Security. USNORTHCOM is just one supporting organization in a much larger interagency and international law enforcement effort to combat TCOs operating in North America and within the Western Hemisphere.¹⁵</p>	<p>As part of an integrated national strategy and in coordination with other government agencies and partner nations, DOD/USSOUTHCOM conducts a synchronized, comprehensive, and continuous support campaign with A/S State WHA [Assistant Secretary State for Western Hemisphere Affairs] to contribute to the defeat of transnational criminal networks and create an environment inhospitable to these networks and their illicit trafficking in order to reduce transnational organized crime from a national security threat to a manageable public safety problem within the Western Hemisphere.¹⁶</p>
<p>End State 3: DOD has contributed the necessary capabilities and support to disrupt, degrade, and defeat TCO's abilities to affect US and partner nations' security interests negatively.¹⁷</p>	<p>End State: Safer more secure region; criminal organizations and operations unable to destabilize governments or threaten security; US southern approach and interests protected¹⁸</p>

At the highest levels, it is clear the priorities are aligned. The threats are not necessarily specific to one geographic area and can apply across the spectrum of geography, space and time. TCOs are a threat to populations and individual citizens, to the security of the United States, and to a regional stability that crosses countries, ethnicities, cultures and borders. Within the hemisphere, second and third order effects by one GCC’s actions impact the other’s

and are very real. For example, "Canada experienced a spillover effect on its border with the United States when there has been increased attention placed on U.S. southern border or Caribbean trafficking routes. It is extremely likely that Mexican drug trafficking organizations are expanding their operations in Canada today, where they see the U.S.-Canadian border as more porous and easier to penetrate."¹⁹

As the "ways" are more clearly delineated to address the threat of TCOs, one ever-present theme is the necessity to build partner relationships. Whether from the north in Canada to the most southern countries in South America, countering the TCO threat cannot be done alone. "The most successful security agreements have been those shaped by shared threat perceptions and the imminence of attack."²⁰ In the SOUTHCOM AOR, it is "less about preparing for major military operations and more about building international partnerships."²¹ This is recognized not only as a U.S. military objective, but also demonstrated regularly in the C-TCO actions of partner nations such as Mexico and Colombia where bilateral and regional partnering efforts have been proactive, robust and productive. In many cases, it is about the relationships forged during adversity, such as humanitarian disasters, that endure regardless of the situation. For the countries in the Western Hemisphere, the TCO threat remains the same, and the efficiencies that can be leveraged need to be studied. As captured by House Armed Services Chairman U.S. Representative McKeon, "in a changing budget environment and with new Defense strategy laid out, evaluate each combatant command and their interpretation of mission and goals within DOD becomes vital."²²

CASE STUDIES

Each GCC has demonstrated varying levels of success supporting partner nations in the whole of government approaches to combating TCOs and conducting counter-illicit trafficking (CIT) operations. SOUTHCOM and NORTHCOM have supported State Department led C-TCO/CIT campaigns within Plan Colombia and the Merida Initiative, respectively. Additionally, each GCC has subordinate organizations charged with providing military support to CIT operations. An examination of Plan Colombia, the Merida Initiative, Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S) and Joint Task Force Bravo (JTF-B) operations in SOUTHCOM and Joint Task Force North (JTF-N) operations under NORTHCOM illustrate current constraints and restraints of coordinated whole of government actions.

Plan Colombia

Plan Colombia was developed by former Colombian President Pastrana as a six-year plan with the intent to eliminate drug trafficking and end Colombia's armed conflict by promoting social and economic growth.²³ The primary vehicle for U.S. involvement was provided by the Andean Counterdrug Initiative. From the onset, the U.S. and Colombian objectives differed greatly. The U.S. goal was to prevent the flow of illegal drugs into the U.S. As the campaign evolved, objectives shifted from counternarcotics to counterinsurgency aimed at ending the armed conflict between the Colombian government and illegal armed groups, mainly the FARC, National Liberation Army (ENL), and United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), which operate in Colombia and profit from the participation in the drug trade.²⁴

The U.S. assistance package was broken into five components: improving governing capacity and support for human rights, expansion of counternarcotics operations into southern Colombia, alternative economic development, increased interdiction efforts, and assistance for the Colombian police. It is important to note that implicit to U.S. support of Plan Colombia, with respect to expansion of counternarcotics operations and interdiction, was the involvement of the U.S. military. Military support took the form of procurement, training and support for additional Colombian counter-narcotics battalions, aviation, airborne early warning, air and riverine interdiction, counternarcotics intelligence infrastructure and logistics.²⁵

The results of Plan Colombia were mixed. Measurable improvements were made in Colombia's internal security with the defeat of the insurgencies, a decrease in violence and the eradication of crops. However, staunch policy opponents and critics point to major flaws in the plan that resulted in no discernible decrease of the availability and trafficking of drugs into the U.S. Nonetheless, Plan Colombia stands as one of the first partnering efforts in the Hemisphere to address the TCO threat.

Merida Initiative

Alternatively, the Merida Initiative was created in response to Mexico's request for increased cooperation and assistance in its war on drugs. The plan entailed a three-year, \$1.6 billion foreign aid package and security cooperation program between the United States, Mexico and Caribbean implemented in 2008. Unlike Plan Colombia, which helped to rescue Colombia from a violent narco-insurgency, the Merida Initiative assisted Mexico and other countries with civil assistance in the form of training, technology and equipment, without a significant U.S. military footprint, in order to improve their capabilities in countering the violence stemming from TCOs.²⁶ The program was viewed as a new type of regional security strategy since it claimed that success relied upon the commitment of all countries involved to accept "shared responsibility" to tackle their own domestic problems that fuel drug trafficking and crime in the region.²⁷ By the end of 2011, \$896 million had been allocated, more than half for training and equipping Mexico's police and military security forces.²⁸

The most successful outcome of the initiative is the increase in capacity of Mexican law enforcement and judicial institutions to disrupt and prosecute TCOs. The U.S.-Mexico relationship has been strengthened through this partnership and collaboration. Merida supporters cite the benefit of a security cooperation partnership rather than the foreign aid program, while emphasizing the need for continued funding in order to build capacity in military and civilian institutions so that the bilateral and regional efforts can succeed.²⁹ Overall, the Merida Initiative has failed to curb violence stemming from illicit drug trafficking. The U.S. is shifting emphasis from the federal to state and local levels. This new focus has identified several non-military soft power approaches that could be initiated post-Merida. Potential programs range from constabulary forces and community policing to education and training programs that counter unemployment to programs aimed at improving local government transparency and accountability.³⁰ To implement such diverse programs would require a more robust and comprehensive approach that includes significant participation from the U.S. interagency partners, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

The fight against TCOs who engage in illicit trafficking cannot be defeated by eradication and interdiction alone is the lesson learned in the execution of Plan Colombia. Both Plan Colombia and the Merida Initiative are rooted in partnerships committed to collective action and shared responsibility to address common security challenges. Both were bilateral initiatives that addressed a specific crisis and threat to U.S. national security interests.

Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S) and Joint Task Force Bravo (JTF-B)

The three original joint interagency task forces (JIATFs), JIATF East in Key West, Florida, JIATF South in Panama and JIATF West in Alameda, California were established in 1994 under the National Interdiction Command and Control Plan to plan, conduct and direct interagency detection, monitoring and tracking operations of air and maritime narcotics smuggling activities in the Atlantic, Caribbean and Pacific respectively.³¹ As a subordinate of SOUTHCOM, Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S), now in Key West, Florida, "conducts interagency and international Detection & Monitoring operations, and facilitates the interdiction of illicit trafficking and other narco-terrorist threats in support of national and partner nation security."³² In addition to detecting and monitoring suspect air and maritime drug activity

in the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico and the Eastern Pacific, JIATF-S collects and disseminates CIT information for interagency and partner nation operations and coordinates information sharing between law enforcement agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).³³ JIATF-S coordinates U.S. military, U.S. Coast Guard, interagency and partner nations' ships and aircraft in the conduct of patrols and persistent surveillance of routes of illicit trafficking. In the execution of interdictions operations U.S. military assets act in direct support of U.S. law enforcement agencies and partner nations.³⁴

The CIT success of JIATF-S is described by SOUTHCOM Commander, General Douglas Fraser:

Considered the linchpin in U.S. counterdrug efforts, JIATF South capitalizes on the unique capabilities, authorities and strengths of interagency partners such as the [DEA], the [FBI], and [DHS]. In 2011, JIATF South operations resulted in the disruption of 117 metric tons of cocaine, denying illicit traffickers approximately \$3 billion in revenue. ...[I]n 2010, JIATF South supported the interdiction of eight times the amount of cocaine than was interdicted on the Southwest border, at a third of the cost and in an operating area that covers 42 million square miles.³⁵

SOUTHCOM's CIT operations in Central America are augmented by the presence of Joint Task Force Bravo (JTF-B) in Comayagua, Honduras. The creation and stand-up of JTF-B in 1984 exemplified DoD leadership acknowledgement that a joint task force construct brings value to the myriad of missions. As a forward operating location for SOUTHCOM, JTF-B supports Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief (HA/DR) response and DEA-led CIT operations.³⁶ The latter role is critical as Central America is becoming the nexus for TCO illicit trafficking activities as maritime and air interdictions over the Caribbean and in the Eastern Pacific drive TCOs to use Central America as a transshipment point for onward terrestrial movement of narcotics to Mexico.

Joint Task Force North (JTF-N)

Joint Task Force North (JTF-N) is a NORTHCOM subordinate organization responsible for providing homeland defense, civil support and theater security cooperation. In the homeland defense role, JTF-N provides military support to federal law enforcement agencies to interdict suspected transnational threats within and along the approaches to the continental United States. Headquartered at Fort Bliss, Texas, JTF-N coordinates military support requests for the interagency and facilitates planning and mission execution. JTF-N has the capability to provide diverse support to the interagency including operations, intelligence, engineering, training, transportation and sustainment, as well as conduct interagency synchronization and technology integration. In response to the growing TCO threat, JTF-N is shifting intelligence focus from the border outward and expanding cooperation with Canadian and Mexican authorities.³⁷

In contrast to JIATF-S, JTF-N CIT operations are constrained by many factors. Foremost, JTF-N remains a military organization lacking critical interagency synergies. As a military entity it is restricted to Title 10 authorities that impede full integration with the law enforcement agencies it supports. Primarily a coordinator and facilitator of military support, JTF-N does not have a command and control role and does not direct military, interagency or partner nation CIT operations. Its detection and monitoring capabilities within the U.S. are also legally restricted.

RESTRAINTS AND CONSTRAINTS

As illustrated with the examinations of Plan Colombia, the Merida Initiative, JIATF-S, JTF-B and JTF-N, even the most successful interagency, whole of government approaches

face numerous implementation and execution challenges. Authorities available to employ military assets in largely law enforcement missions are limited. A focus on single countries or sub-regions can have unintended consequences. Partner nations' capability and willingness to participate in C-TCO/CIT operations can vary. Many of these challenges could be overcome by taking an integrated approach across the Western Hemisphere to synchronize NORTHCOM and SOUTHCOM efforts in combating TCOs illicit trafficking activity.

Authorities available to the GCCs and their subordinate organizations limit the employment of military assets in C-TCO/CIT operations and argue for an interagency approach. Title 10 limitations restrict DoD to a support role in C-TCO/CIT both domestically and internationally. Requests for domestic DoD support must be routed first through the National Guard, which can be employed in law enforcement operations under Title 32 and State Active Duty authorities. Federal DoD forces can be requested for domestic operations when the National Guard is not available, but cannot be employed in law enforcement activities due to Posse Comitatus Act restrictions.³⁸ This is the model under which JTF-N operates, constraining its effectiveness in domestic CIT operations in contrast to the international operations of JIATF-S.

The DoD supports a Department of State lead on most bilateral international C-TCO/CIT efforts. The State Department is responsible for coordinating all counterdrug assistance programs in Latin America with the exception of some rule of law and development programs administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).³⁹ The GCCs are tasked primarily with intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) missions, operations, maintenance, linguistic, command, control, communication, and computer support, logistics and transportation, to include the use of military vessels by law enforcement. It is these support activities that JIATF-S and JTF-B successfully synchronize to conduct CIT operations. Further, DoD has specific legislative authorities to provide training and equipping assistance to relevant agencies of foreign governments, but is restricted to providing only basic training to foreign law enforcement organizations. In the SOUTHCOM AOR this mission can only be accomplished by special operations forces.⁴⁰ The benefits to a joint task force or interagency command and control construct are imperative in building a wide network for situational awareness, collaboration and efficiency.

Many perceived victories towards countering TCOs have proven transitory and not reduced overall illicit drug supply due to the "balloon effect," where pressure against one area drives drug-related activities to another area.⁴¹ "Temporary successes in one country or [a] sub-region have often led traffickers to alter their cultivation patterns, production techniques and methods in order to avoid detection."⁴² U.S. bilateral efforts have simply pushed the problem from one country to the next. Coca eradication efforts in Peru and Bolivia during the 1980's and 1990's inadvertently pushed production into Colombia, spawning the Medellin, Cali Cartels and FARC. The local success of Plan Colombia has merely pushed TCOs back into Peru and to Central America. JIATF-S's maritime and air interdiction against illicit trafficking routes through the Caribbean has led to the utilization of terrestrial smuggling routes, destabilizing Central America and increasing violence. Without an overall integrated regional approach, singular successes can have unintended consequences.

The role of partner nations in a C-TCO/CIT strategy is critical as noted in NORTHCOM and SOUTHCOM theater strategies, but willingness and capabilities to participate varies. Despite shared interests among the nations of the Western Hemisphere to combat TCOs and their illicit trafficking, each nation has its own perspective. While the U.S. as a superpower views the TCOs as the primary regional threat, Latin American states seek above all to protect their individual sovereignty, often impeding CIT international cooperation.⁴³ The U.S. has developed mature C-TCO/CIT partnerships with Peru and Colombia (Plan Colombia) and is expanding relationships with Mexico (Merida Initiative), Central America and the Caribbean.⁴⁴ However, the perceived failure of the U.S. "war on drugs" to curb illegal drug production has

drawn criticism in the region, leading to reduced participation in CIT efforts, especially by Bolivia and Venezuela.⁴⁵ Populist leaders in Latin America are leveraging public discontent with bilateral counternarcotics programs and exploiting anti-U.S. sentiment regarding perceived interference in internal affairs to maintain internal controls and avoid international interdiction obligations.⁴⁶

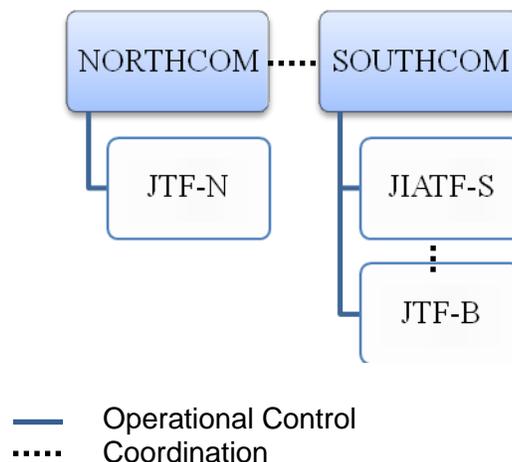
In contrast, willing partner nations, especially those with resources and increased capacities, are contributing to regional C-TCO/CIT efforts. As a result of capabilities developed under Plan Colombia, Colombia is providing training to Latin American military personnel and Central American police forces.⁴⁷ The Colombian Air Force is training and assisting the Honduran Air Force with interdiction of illicit air traffic and the Colombian Navy has amongst the highest narcotics interdiction success rates. Along with Colombia, the navies of Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador and Panama are contributing interdiction capabilities to JIATF-S operations.⁴⁸ Chile has offered its expertise in maritime domain awareness to Central American states, and Brazil has facilitated trilateral counternarcotics cooperation among itself, the U.S., and a reluctant Bolivia as well as interdicting 115 tons of drugs on its borders.⁴⁹

Given the contributions of international partners to a C-TCO/CIT strategy, the U.S. needs to continue to build hemispheric cooperative relationships and capacities with and among Latin American states that they will view as strengthening their sovereignty in the face of the threat of instability caused by TCOs. As the SOUTHCOM Commander states, “The intricately networked, globalized nature of transnational organized crime signifies that no one country or agency can solve this problem alone; collaboration with partner nations and across the U.S. government will be essential to successfully mitigate this threat.”⁵⁰

COURSES OF ACTION

The integrated approach advocated by SOUTHCOM is vital to overcome the current challenges and provide effective DoD support of C-TCO/CIT strategy. This approach requires new GCC organizational structures and command and control (C2) relationships aimed at achieving unity of effort. Three C2 constructs should be considered to achieve NORTHCOM and SOUTHCOM unity of effort with partner nations to provide a defense in depth against the illicit trafficking threat posed by TCOs. The current GCC C-TCO/CIT structure is depicted in Figure 2.

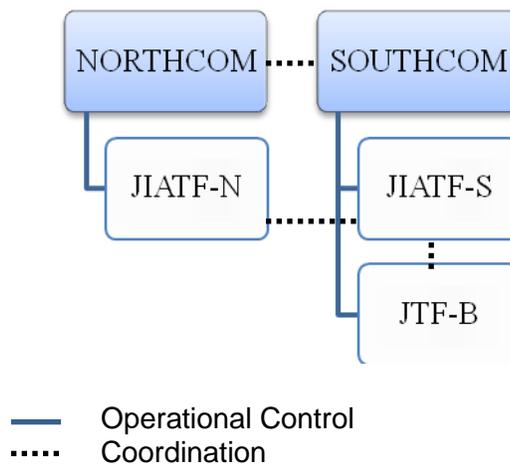
Figure 2: Existing GCC C-TCO/CIT C2 Structure



A near-term C2 solution is the expansion of the role of JTF-N to that of a JIATF modeled upon JIATF-S. A mid-term solution is the establishment of JIATF Americas to coordinate an interagency approach to combating TCOs throughout Latin American and across NORTHCOM and SOUTHCOM boundaries. Lastly, a long-term approach would be the merger of NORTHCOM and SOUTHCOM into an Americas Command (AMERICOM), to provide a comprehensive defense of the U.S. and conduct security cooperation throughout the Western Hemisphere.

The near-term C2 construct for the conduct of C-TCO/CIT operations is the transition of JTF-N to a JIATF. The success of JIATF-S, as the lead interagency organization conducting CIT in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific, has been described earlier in this paper. A JIATF for operations in the homeland and its approaches would be the mechanism to achieve unity of effort among federal law enforcement agencies and the military to provide command and control, intelligence, planning and operations execution capability.⁵¹ Expanding the role of JTF-N from principally a headquarters coordinating military support to law enforcement agencies to a full interagency organization capable of planning, executing and directing detection, monitoring and tracking of TCO illicit activities in the terrestrial domain and approaches to the U.S. would close a capabilities gap in current C-TCO operations. JTF-N would also retain its domestic support and theater security cooperation roles for NORTHCOM. As a natural NORTHCOM counterpart to JIATF-S, JIATF North (JIATF-N) would provide a single point of contact and ensure continuity of effort as illicit traffickers move between GCC AORs. The focused effort of JIATF-S would not be lost as intelligence and targets are handed off from a single, integrated joint and combined command to a federation of intelligence, law enforcement, military and Mexican counternarcotics stakeholders. The GCC C2 arrangement is depicted in Figure 3.

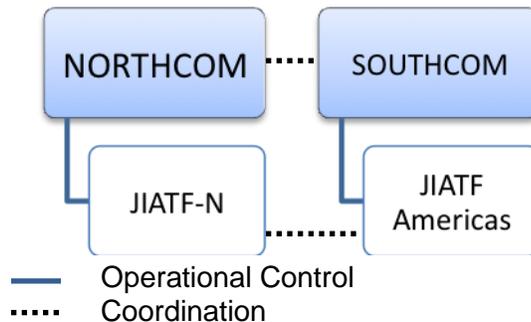
Figure 3: GCC C-TCO/CIT C2 Structure w/JIATF-N



The mid-term C2 construct to achieve unity of effort between NORTHCOM and SOUTHCOM for C-TCO/CIT operations would be the creation of a JIATF Americas to conduct interagency C-TCO/CIT operations within both GCC AORs. JIATF Americas would incorporate the air and maritime missions of JIATF-S with the terrestrial and DEA support missions of JTF-B.⁵² With a desired responsibility for interdicting transnational threats throughout Latin America, the JIATF does not logically subordinate to either NORTHCOM or SOUTHCOM under the current UCP.⁵³ Unless JIATF Americas were elevated to a national level organization or subordinated to a functional combatant command, the UCP would need to be modified to

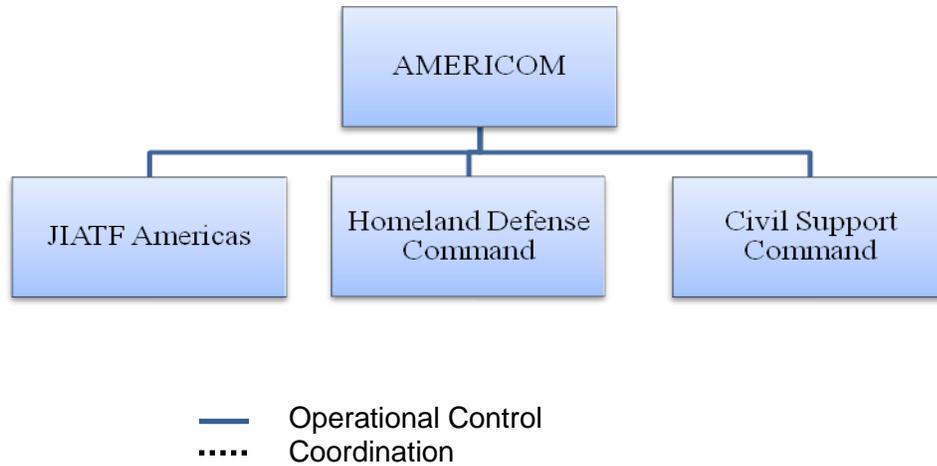
accommodate its functions. Mexico and The Bahamas would need to be transferred to SOUTHCOM allow JIATF Americas to become a sub-unified command of SOUTHCOM. Although likely to be resisted by both NORTHCOM and Mexico, this arrangement would have the additional benefit of aligning all of Latin America and the Caribbean under SOUTHCOM and allowing NORTHCOM to focus on homeland defense and civil support tasks while maintaining security cooperation with Canada. JIATF Americas would still require a partner in the form of the proposed JIATF North to provide for the conduct of domestic C-TCO/CIT operations. This C2 structure is depicted in Figure 4.

Figure 4: GCC C-TCO/CIT C2 w/JIATF Americas



The most ambitious, practical, yet politically challenging C2 construct to ensure NORTHCOM and SOUTHCOM unity of effort in the C-TCO/CIT mission is the creation of an Americas Command (AMERICOM), by merging NORTHCOM and SOUTHCOM. Included in this new GCC would be at least two sub-unified commands, the JIATF Americas described earlier and a Homeland Defense Command.⁵⁴ In this case the C-TCO/CIT responsibility of JIATF Americas would be extended throughout the Western Hemisphere, to include domestic support of law enforcement and cooperation with Canadian civil and military authorities. Critics have charged that creation of an AMERICOM may erode the successes in homeland defense and civil support gained with the creation of NORTHCOM post-9/11. The provision of a Homeland Defense Command as well as a Civil Support Command as a third AMERICOM sub-unified command would ensure a balance of resources and focus amongst the diverse mission sets in the new GCC. Despite institutional resistance and inertia, forthcoming defense austerity measures may ultimately argue for the efficiencies and effectiveness an AMERICOM in C-TCO/CIT, homeland defense and civil support roles. The AMERICOM C2 structure is shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: AMERICOM GCC C2 Structure



CONCLUSION

The UCP inhibits the ability of the U.S. Government to achieve unity of effort in combating TCO illicit trafficking activities in Latin American. Although NORTHCOM and SOUTHCOM are both pursuing C-TCO strategies within the Western Hemisphere, they are not integrated or coordinated to achieve coherent hemispheric results.⁵⁵ The role of the DoD, and specifically NORTHCOM and SOUTHCOM, in the *National Strategy to Combat Transnational Crime* is not clearly defined despite the GCCs' responsibilities for homeland defense and security cooperation in Latin America, the nexus of TCOs' activities impacting U.S. national security. Without a fundamental realignment of the command and control structures of the Western Hemisphere GCCs along the lines proposed in this paper, DoD capacity to support interagency C-TCO/CIT strategy will remain fragmented and fail to achieve the unity of effort necessary to defeat these adaptive transnational threats.

END NOTES

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